

# **Libby Community Advisory Group**

## **Meeting Summary**

### **November 10, 2005**

#### **Introductions**

Gerald Mueller and members of the Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG) introduced themselves. A list of the members in attendance is attached below as Appendix 1.

#### **Agenda**

The CAG agreed to the following agenda for this meeting:

- Agency Reports
  - EPA
  - TAG
  - CARD Clinic
  - ARD NET
- Public Comment

#### **EPA Report**

Peggy Churchill reported on behalf of EPA on the following topics.

General Cleanup - Cleanup activity has stopped for the year with the exception of minor work by BNSF which should finished by Monday or Tuesday of next week. This year to date, EPA has completed cleanups of a total of 225 Libby properties, 25 over the 2005 goal.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study - The next EPA community involvement newspaper column will address the remedial investigation. The date for issuing the remedial investigation report has slipped and is now expected in January 2006. After the remedial investigation column, the next will address the feasibility study. This study will consider questions such as how clean is clean, i.e. the level should the cleanup achieve.

Country Pizza - EPA has finished the removal of the attic insulation and the cleanup of the building housing Country Pizza. The business has not yet reopened.

Contractor Training - EPA is planning a contractor training session at the college in Libby for spring 2006. This session will be held in conjunction with the state asbestos abatement program and will be open to licensed contractors who might come in contact with asbestos contamination both inside and outside of buildings. Attendance will limited to about 20 individuals on a first-come-first serve basis. Additional sessions of this training will be offered at a later date.

Fact Sheets - Three fact sheets are being prepared for homeowners, tradesman, and contractors, respectively. The homeowner sheet will be similar to the Living with Vermiculate brochure and will provide guidance for addressing small amounts of vermiculite found in and around residences. It will be mailed to everyone on the EPA residential mailing list. The contractor fact sheet will be provided to all who attend the contractor training. Copies of all three fact sheets will be available at the EPA Information Center.

Troy - A meeting was recently held in Denver concerning the contaminant screening study that will be conducted this coming summer in Troy. The meeting was attended by EPA, Catherine LeCours, and the state's contractor that will conduct the study, Tetra Tech EM Inc.

*CAG Member Comment - It would be useful to hold a training session for people who are planning home remodeling.*

Response - EPA has not planned for such a session, but it is a good idea.

*Audience Member Question - Will attendees be certified at the end of the contractor training?*

Answer - Assuming they pass the test at the end of the session and pay their state license fee, they will be certified.

*CAG Member Question - The Nightline Program that aired last week mentioned that 15 - 35 million homes in this country contain vermiculite insulation contaminated with asbestos. Have people contacted Region 8 or any other EPA region about this?*

Answer - Not yet. I did receive a call from someone in Ottawa, Canada about asbestos contamination. The EPA Information Center has received calls from New Jersey and from Kalispell, Montana.

*Audience Member Question - When will the contamination of Highway 37 be addressed?*

Answer - After the record of decision is published.

*Audience Member Question - How was Highway 37 contaminated?*

Answer - I am not sure.

*Audience Member Comment - The only trucks that have hauled asbestos contaminated material on this highway since it was rebuilt have been operated by EPA contractors. W.R. Grace has not used it since then. If EPA contractors have re-contaminated the road, then I am not sure that Libby is as safe as you say it is.*

Response - Because of the ongoing criminal proceeding and the cost recovery litigation, I cannot discuss in public who might be responsible for the contamination of Highway 37 except to say that EPA contractors are not. I can discuss this with you in private.

*Audience Member Comment - W.R. Grace was out of business in 1990. The road was rebuilt in 1996. It was re-contaminated in five years. Someone is leaking contamination in the county.*

*CAG Member Comment - I worked for the power company during 1987-1988. I worked in the ditches along Highway 37, and I saw that they were shiny with vermiculite.*

*Audience Member Comment - In 1996, when the highway was rebuilt, the shoulders and two inches below the old asphalt were stripped and replaced with virgin soil from the re-regulation site. There could not have been contamination along the highway then. There is only one way the contamination could have occurred, by EPA contractor trucks. I have followed these trucks and observed the tarps billowing, which means that fibers were being released. I am concerned that the town may be more contaminated now than before the cleanup.*

*Audience Member Comment - People have hauled contaminated grass clippings to the dump using the highway. The road to the dump should be sampled.*

*Audience Member Comment - The contaminated school track was covered with asphalt, but contamination was still found.*

*Audience Member Comment - Zonolite and W.R. Grace were the source of the contamination; they should be responsible for the cleanup.*

*Audience Member Comment - Paul Peronard acknowledged that EPA knew about the contamination in the 1970s and 1980s, but dropped the ball.*

*CAG Member Question - When will information about the source of the highway contamination be available publicly?*

Answer - When the criminal investigation and trial are finished, this can be discussed. Until then, I cannot talk about W.R. Grace's history, the source of contamination, or who is responsible for it.

*CAG Member Question and Comment - Isn't it a question of science about the source of the contamination? If the highway has been re-contaminated, then we need better control of the trucks that are traveling to the dump.*

*Audience Member Comment - W.R. Grace has not hauled anything to the dump; only EPA contractors have done so.*

Response - When EPA contractors have hauled contaminated insulation to the dump, they have done so in closed boxes.

*Audience Member Question - Couldn't you sample the road to the dump over the next couple of months to resolve this issue?*

Answer - I hear your suggestion. However, sampling Pipe Creek Road will not be a high priority. We need to spend our funds cleaning people's houses where exposure is likely to occur.

*CAG Member Question - What was the nature of the contamination found along the highway?*

Answer - Both tailings and raw vermiculite were found.

## **TAG Report**

Gayla Benefield and Helen Clarke reported on behalf of the TAG. The TAG continues to work with the City of Libby and Lincoln County concerning the position of a community resource specialist who would provide education concerning cleanup of small amounts of vermiculite such as spills from wall electricity outlets. A decision is expected next spring regarding this position. The TAG Technical Advisor, Dr. Gerry M. Henningsen, has planned a meeting next month with Jim Christiansen, Chris Weis, and Aubrey Miller in Denver. Dr. Henningsen will also attend next month's TAG meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, December 6, and the CAG meeting on December 8. Aubrey Miller is also expected to attend the December CAG meeting. Dr. Black is the newest member of the TAG Board of Directors. The TAG continues to solicit additional Board members. Please contact LeRoy Thom if you are interested in serving in this way.

## **CARD Clinic Report**

Tanis Hernandez reported on behalf of the CARD Clinic. She distributed copies of the Clinic's latest newsletter. Next week is the Great American Smoke Out. Next Tuesday night a meeting will be held at St. John's Lutheran Hospital for those preparing to quit smoking. On November 16 -17 packets for those wishing to quit will be available at a table in Rosauers. Ms. Hernandez stated that people with lungs that have been exposed to asbestos who smoke cigarettes have elevated risk of lung cancer.

*Audience Member Question - Have we had a response to the HNA W.R. Grace health plan letter?*  
Answer - No.

## **ARD NET Report**

Gayla Benefield reported that ARD NET is planning to hold the Asbestos Health Fair next May 13, 2006.

## **Public Comment**

*CAG Member Comment - The City has provided land in Riverside Park for a slab for a memorial to those who have died as a result of asbestos related disease.*

*Audience Member Comment - The City has received objections to placing the names of deceased on a memorial on city property because scientific evidence is not available that all died from asbestos related disease. We do not wish to see deaths politicized and family pitted against family.*

*Audience Member Comment - The design of the memorial has not been decided.*

*Audience Member Comment - A permanent memorial at Riverside Park would be appropriate. The memorial is intended to replace the annual placement of crosses which began as a statement about people lost to asbestos-related disease. We have never had a cross removed or a complaint from a family whose member was represented by a cross. The families have thanked us for putting up the crosses.*

*Audience Member Comment - No one dies of asbestos-related disease. They die of complications resulting from this disease.*

*Audience Member Comment - Everyone in the county should know about the asbestos-related disease deaths.*

*Audience Member Comment - Chuck Riley should be complemented for his work related to the memorial and for the new playground equipment at Plummer School. I take visitors to Libby to Plummer to show how the site has been cleaned of contamination and the new playground there. It represents the progress in our community and how we are not living in the past.*

## **Next Meeting**

The next CAG meeting was scheduled for 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 8, 2005 in the Ponderosa Room of Libby City Hall. The agenda will include a presentation by the TAG Technical Advisor, Dr. Gerry M. Henningsen.

## **Appendix 1**

### **CAG Member & Guest Attendance List November 10, 2005**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Group/Organization Represented</b>
K.W. Maki	Libby Schools
Dr. Brad Black	Lincoln County Health Officer/CARD
Bill Patten	St. John's Lutheran Hospital
Ken Hays	Senior Citizens
Ted Linnert	EPA Community Involvement
Peggy Churchill	EPA Project Manager
LeRoy Thom	LAMP
Gayla Benefield	TAG, ARD NET
Eileen Carney	Montana State Board of Respite Care
Norita Skramstad	Asbestos Victim